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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: DAS BRYZA AND AMBASSADOR MEET WITH PM'S FOREIGN
POLICY ADVISOR

(U) Classified by Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d).

¶1. (C) Summary: EUR DAS Bryza met with PM Erdogan's senior foreign policy advisor Ahmet Davutoglu April 5. On Iraq, Davutoglu urged more ethnic diversity on the Iraqi NSC and worried about what he sees as growing Iranian-backed Shia power. He averred that Turkey does not want a nuclear-armed Iran on its border but urged careful tactics toward Iran. He opposed what he called an "economic boycott" of HAMAS and said that Turkey could play an active role in the MEPP. End Summary.

Iraq

¶2. (C) Davutoglu identified Iraq as the number one item on Turkey's foreign policy agenda. While Turkey sees the situation as critical, he said, Turkey and the U.S. are in synch on Iraq: it is essential that Iraq have a unitary state, that its institutions take into account all in the population. Davutoglu expressed concern about the NSC, because its current 19 members include no Turkmen and no Christian. The NSC will be instrumental in security issues among Iraq's various communities, including regarding the status of the multi-ethnic city of Kirkuk. Kirkuk is the only truly multiethnic city (&colorful with minorities8 were his words); at this stage, he said, if there is a major dispute there, without any Turkmen or Christian representation on the NSC, civil war could result. Davutoglu worried that it would be difficult to get the buy-in of these segments of the population if they are disenfranchised in the decision-making process. Davutoglu suggested increasing the number of members in the NSC to 21, with the addition of one Turkmen and one Christian. Davutoglu said he discussed this concern with Iraqi Sunnis (not further identified) with whom he met April 4 in Istanbul and they reacted favorably -- including because of the large Turkmen and Christian populations in/around Kirkuk. In some instances, a Turkmen, for example, could provide an ethnic buffer, for example within the NSC, or deployed as police in Baghdad, including because the Turkmen population straddles religious sectarian lines. He stressed that Turkey has in mind no specific individual and is really only concerned about the NSC's ability and effectiveness.

13. (C) Davutoglu expressed concern that the Shia are pushing Sunnis out of mixed neighborhoods and are aggravating both terrorism and prospects for serious sectarian conflict. This he linked to his concerns on Iran, which the Turks increasingly see as holding too much sway in Iraq. When Jaaferi came to Turkey, the Turks told him he could not/bethe PM of the Shi'ites; all Iraqis must feel he represents them. Davutoglu claimed the PM and FM Gul have limits on what they can say about Iraq; they are moving gradually into election mode, and their room for maneuver on a series of issues will be more and more constricted. If, for example, violence flares next year and there are serious ethnic/religious problems in Kirkuk, the Turkish public will react harshly, the issue will become domestic political fodder, and the politicians here will treat it as such.

Iran

14. (C) On Iran, Davutoglu claimed the GoT does not want any nuclear armed states on its borders. For the first time, the Shi'a are seeing themselves as ascendant in the region (he worried about an emerging Shi'a mainstream belt stretching from Iran to the Gulf). Nuclear capacity would give Iran and its Shi'a allies a new status. He described Iran as diplomatically very capable; it has a long tradition and knows countries, weak points. Unlike the Iraqis, Iranians have a strong state tradition. He worried that Iran could create instability that would affect Iraq and the Caucasus. Davutoglu said that tactically, Turkey had to be careful. 75,000 Turkish trucks transit Iran yearly to Central Asia; absent a solution in Nagorno-Karabakh, it would be difficult for Turkey to find another route. All three factors explain

ANKARA 00002048 002 OF 003

why Turkey has chosen to back the EU-3 and diplomacy. Davutoglu believes the U.S. and Turkey need to apply pressure wisely and coordinate better on Iran. The USG should accept Turkey's efforts at what he called &balancing statements8) an effort to keep the Iranians in check while keeping a careful rhetorical balance. Davutoglu complained that people misinterpreted his concept of "strategic depth" as meaning Turkey sought to deepen its relations only with its Muslim neighbors. In reality, Turkey sought more constructive relations with all its neighbors, 6 of which were Christian (including countries across the Black Sea).

HAMAS/Palestine

15. (C) Davutoglu averred the Quartet made a mistake in allowing Hamas to compete in the elections without first securing Hamas' commitment to the Quartet's three conditions, (e.g., recognize Israel, forswear terrorism, and abide by existing agreements). He claimed that during the HAMAS visit, Turkish interlocutors stressed that HAMAS should play according to the rules of civilized behavior and democracy. Now, if the U.S. and EU give Hamas the cold shoulder, Hamas will settle under Iran's wing; this is what Turkey seeks to prevent, he said. Davutoglu said he is personally against any "economic boycott" of Iran because it is always the people who suffer, not the regime. Moreover, economic sanctions would allow the Hamas regime simply to blame the Americans and EU for Palestinians' suffering. Davutoglu said Turkey wants to and can play a helpful role in the region: Abbas has, he said, several times phoned Erdogan to ask for Turkish help.

16. (C) Bryza recognized that Turkey might be able to play a useful role with respect to Hamas, but that Secretary Rice was deeply disappointed with the GOT's reception of the recent Hamas delegation at such a high level, as Ambassador Wilson had conveyed. Such questions of form were import. Davutoglu conceded that the form of the Hamas visit was "probably a mistake," but insisted Turkey could help moderate

Hamas' behavior.

Cyprus

¶7. (C) Davutoglu said he knows the USG is pursuing what he termed &partial implementation8 of Turkey's commitment to the EU to open its ports to Greek Cypriot ships) perhaps opening Famagusta and a port in Turkey. This would be fine, he said, if Famagusta were opened under Turkish Cypriot control, but under UN control it would be unacceptable domestically because it would look to hardliners as if the Turks had abdicated sovereignty. What, he asked rhetorically, would Turkey get in return? Bryza noted Turkey had already secured its 40-year quest to begin EU accession negotiations. The U.S. was not trying to help Turkey help itself to sustain its EU accession process. Davutoglu responded that the EU process is being increasingly viewed in Turkey as just a series of Turkish concessions, but Turkey will continue to work it.

Bilateral Relations-----

¶8. (C) On U.S.-Turkey relations, Davutoglu said that both countries should focus on the 90% of agenda where we can achieve success and agree, rather than on the 10% where there are problems. He expressed a desire to re-think our joint international agenda. The U.S.-Turkey strategic vision paper now under discussion should not just be a list of issues, but should provide a joint vision on key issues)- Central Asia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, etc. -- that would shape our future work together. Bryza welcomed this suggestion, and looked forward to Turkey's new version of the draft.

Black Sea

¶9. (C) DAS Bryza explained that the U.S. sought cooperation

ANKARA 00002048 003 OF 003

on soft security, energy, and democracy in the Black Sea. The U.S. appreciated Turkey's sensitivities regarding the Montreaux Convention, and would not press for an expanded NATO maritime presence in the Black Sea beyond that which had naturally emerged by virtue of NATO membership for Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania. Bryza urged Turkey to work closely with Romania and attend the June 5 Black Sea Forum summit in Bucharest. Bryza suggested BSEC might improve regional cooperation by developing a clearer set of priority projects.

Davutoglu agreed on both counts. Davutoglu said democracy and the development of strong middle classes in countries such as Ukraine and Georgia were key to their success. Ambassador suggested using APEC as a model, with a better format for cooperation in the Black Sea. Davutoglu said the U.S. should seek to work with Russia -- not provoke it, but also not let it get too strong.

Oil/Gas and Central Asia

¶10. (C) On oil/gas, DAS Bryza explained the BTC cost overrun issue and urged a mutually acceptable settlement of claims. Bryza suggested that Prime Minister Erdogan might ultimately need to be involved, should BOTAS and the GOT decide to cover some of the costs of the overrun. Davutoglu expressed hope that Turkey and the U.S. could work together to develop a trans-Caspian gas pipeline from Turkmenistan. Turkey also needs to work with Kazakhstan; he characterized Nazarbayev as more visionary than Turkmenistani President Niyazov. Davutoglu stressed the need for a joint approach to constrain Russian/Chinese energy monopolies. If Turkmen gas Kazakh oil and gas flow to Azerbaijan and onward to Europe, transit states and Europe will be in a much better place, he said; Russia and Gazprom will not have complete control.

Halki/Western Thrace Mufti

¶11. (C) DAS Bryza reminded Davutoglu of their conversation last August over dinner in Istanbul, when Davutoglu suggested that if the Greek Government allowed the Turkish minority in Western Thrace to elect its mufti, it would be considerably easier for the Turkish government to reopen the Ecumenical Patriarch's religious school at Halki. Bryza explained that during his discussions a few days earlier in Greece, he had explored the possibility of separating the mufti's function of civil judge from the mufti's function as a community and religious leader. The Greek Government could appoint a judge, while the Turkish community could select its own mufti as community and religious leader. Davutoglu reacted positively, though he said the mufti would have to be higher up the scale of authority. Davutoglu said Turkey has no linkage of Greek issues with Halki, but that movement on the mufti issue and more opportunities in Western Thrace for secondary schooling in Turkish would establish a better climate for action by Ankara. Still, Davutoglu lamented that reopening Halki in the context of this improved bilateral climate with Greece would have been easier last summer, before Turkey's election season began to heat up.

¶12. (U) DAS Bryza has cleared this message.

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